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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 08 SEOUL 000674

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; April 27, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

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Ilbo, Dong-a Ilbo, All TVs  
Mexican Swine Flu Death Toll Growing, 81 Dead; WHO Warns Swine Flu  
has "Pandemic Potential"

JoongAng Ilbo  
This New Strain of Swine Flu Spreads in Humans

Hankook Ilbo, Hankyoreh Shinmun, Segye Ilbo,  
Seoul Shinmun  
Former President Roh to be Summoned on April 30  
in Bribery Scandal

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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North Korea's Foreign Ministry announced on April 25 that it has  
begun to reprocess spent fuel rods from its nuclear facilities. A  
spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry was quoted as saying:  
"This will help bolster nuclear deterrence for self-defense in every  
way to cope with the increasing military threat from hostile  
forces," a remark seen as indicating the North's intention to use  
plutonium produced from this reprocessing procedure to make nuclear  
weapons. (All)

This North Korean announcement came just several hours after the UN  
Sanctions Committee slapped sanctions on three North Korean firms  
for aiding Pyongyang's missile and nuclear programs. (All)

Nuclear experts estimated that, within three to six months, North  
Korea could yield enough plutonium for at least one more nuclear  
weapon. (Chosun, Hankoyreh)

The Obama Administration sees this North Korean move as presaging a  
second nuclear test by North Korea and is working to come up with  
countermeasures. The U.S. Administration is likely to press North  
Korea to "give up" its nuclear ambitions through bilateral and  
Six-Party talks. (Chosun)

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said during an April 25 visit to  
Baghdad, "We continue, along with our partners in the Six-Party

Talks, to press North Korea to return to the obligations which it assumed." Secretary Clinton also said in an interview with Fox News: "The U.S. does not have evidence of active proliferation, but will work with allies so that the North does not pretend that they are in compliance with anti-proliferation measures." (Chosun, Dong-a, Hankyoreh, Segye, Seoul, all TVs)

According to a North Korea expert in Washington, Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, will soon visit countries involved in the Six-Party Talks to discuss the North Korean issue. (Chosun, Hankook, Seoul)

According to intelligence authorities, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's youngest son, Jong-un, has been appointed to a post in the powerful National Defense Commission, apparently a sign that he is being groomed as the North's next leader. (Dong-a, Seoul)

#### MEDIA ANALYSIS

##### -North Korea

###### - Trial of Journalists

On Saturday, April 25, ROK media gave wide coverage to North Korea's April 24 announcement that it will put the two detained American journalists on trial to face criminal charges.

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Most ROK media noted that this announcement came a day after Secretary of State Clinton said at a House of Representatives hearing, "We should not give in to the unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime." Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo wrote in a headline: "North Korea Launches 'Hostage Diplomacy' Aiming for Direct Talks." Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun speculated that the fate of the U.S. detainees will likely depend on future U.S.-North Korea relations, rather than North Korean law.

###### - Reprocessing of Spent Fuel Rods

The North Korean Foreign Ministry's April 25 announcement - that it has begun to reprocess spent fuel rods from its nuclear facilities - received wide press coverage today. The ROK media noted that this announcement came just several hours after the UN Sanctions Committee slapped sanctions on three North Korean firms for aiding Pyongyang's missile and nuclear programs.

Most ROK media quoted a spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry as saying: "This will help bolster nuclear deterrence for self-defense in every way to cope with the increasing military threat from hostile forces." The media interpreted this statement as indicating the North's intention to use plutonium produced from this reprocessing procedure to make nuclear weapons.

Citing nuclear experts, conservative Chosun Ilbo and left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun estimated that, within three to six months, North Korea could yield enough plutonium for at least one more nuclear weapon.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo also wrote in an inside-page report from Washington that the Obama Administration sees this move as presaging a second nuclear test by North Korea and is working to come up with countermeasures. The report expected the U.S. Administration to press North Korea to "give up" its nuclear ambitions through bilateral and Six-Party talks.

Chosun Ilbo and other newspapers quoted Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's remark during an April 25 visit to Baghdad, "We continue, along with our partners in the Six-Party Talks, to press North Korea to return to the obligations which it assumed." Secretary Clinton was also quoted during an interview with Fox News as saying: "The U.S. does not have evidence of active proliferation, but will work with allies so that the North does not pretend that they are in compliance with anti-proliferation measures."

In a related development, most ROK media, citing a North Korea expert in Washington, reported that Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, will soon visit countries involved in the Six-Party Talks to discuss the North Korean issue.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "There is a possibility that North Korea may conduct a second nuclear test around the second half of this year. However, the North's nuclear provocation, as evidenced during its recent rocket launch, will only deepen its international isolation and heighten international sanctions against it. ... The North Korean regime should come to terms with this reality and immediately return to the negotiation table."

In an editorial, right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo called for a resolute response to North Korea's stepped-up nuclear threats, arguing: "What matters now is how the U.S. and the ROK will respond. The answer lies in Secretary Clinton's remark at a recent House hearing that (the U.S.) should not give in to the kind of back-and-forth, unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime. The U.S. should keep in mind that unless these words are put into practice as in the past, North Korea's bad behavior will repeat itself. "

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized: "The quid pro quo for North Korea abandoning its nuclear programs is enormous. In addition to the economic rewards promised by the Six-Party nations, the international community will immediately provide food aid for starving North Korean citizens ... Pyongyang's persistent pursuit of

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nuclear programs is a disaster that deprives North Koreans of such opportunities. ... The international community should stand united to bring change to the North through applying effective pressure. To this end, efforts by China and Russia, nations that have long-maintained friendly ties with the North, are critical. In addition to persuading the Kim Jong-il regime to follow in their footsteps through seeking reform and openness, the two nations should also join international efforts to pressure the North."

-Swine Flu

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The ROK media reported that the ROKG convened an emergency meeting yesterday to draw up measures against a new swine flu virus, which claimed the lives of at least 81 people in Mexico and struck 19 people in the U.S.

According to media reports, the ROKG has decided to strengthen inspections on pork imported from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada and to tighten medical screening of people arriving from those countries.

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized: "When it comes to matters directly affecting public health, the importance of meticulous government action cannot be emphasized enough. With more people freely traveling the world, contagious diseases know no national boundaries. Along with heightened surveillance and screening at all points of entry such as airports and harbors, the ROKG must take full advantage of the real-time international data network to stop the swine flu virus from finding its way into Korea. "

#### OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

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OBAMA'S 100 DAYS... HAS DIPLOMATIC PARADIGM CHANGED  
(JoongAng Ilbo, April 27, 2009, Page 41)

By Editorial writer Bae Myeong-bok

On April 29, U.S. President Barack Obama will mark his 100th day in office. He will hold a town hall meeting in St. Louis, Missouri and a prime-time news conference at 8pm.

USA Today and Gallop Poll surveyed 1, 051 male and female adults for Obama's performance based on 5 criteria. 79% evaluated his performance to be better than 'just OK.' In another performance survey conducted several days ago by the Pew Research Center, 63%

supported Obama's performance. This figure falls short of the 80% when he took office, but is not a significant drop given that the 'honeymoon effect' diminishes over time.

The AP News Agency's results are more encouraging for U.S. President Obama. When asked whether the U.S. is heading in the right direction, 48% replied in favor, outstripping the 44% opposed. During the lame duck period of former president Bush, 75% of those surveyed were opposed compared to only 17% in favor. President Obama's early performance is considered to be quite successful.

However, it is too early to speculate that Obama will become a second Roosevelt. 100 days are too short to adequately assess performance. Obama's remarks about 'a glimmer of hope' demonstrate his expectations for economic recovery, but the U.S. economy still lies dark.

Meanwhile, President Obama has surely scored points in the diplomatic area. During his 100 days, Obama showed a shift along diplomatic lines. Moreover, some people claim that the U.S. diplomatic paradigm is changing. U.S. President Obama extended his hand to Iran, which was in the 'axis of evil.' He also extended a conciliatory gesture to Cuba, which is America's 5 decade-long enemy, by lifting a ban on money transfers and travel between Americans and 1.5 million Cuban Americans. Making an about-face from George W. Bush's policy, he proposed direct talks with Iran while permitting Iran's uranium enrichment program to a certain level.

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Obama amicably shook hands with Venezuelan President Chavez, who was a leading figure in antagonizing the U.S. The picture featuring this handshake symbolizes a drastic change in U.S. diplomacy. President Obama is seeking a multilateral, realistic line through smart diplomacy that combines hard power with soft power.

When asked about the difference in his diplomacy from Bush's diplomacy during the London G20 summit earlier this month, Obama responded that he believes that he can exercise the greatest leadership when listening to others, setting an example and showing modesty. Key terms for Obama's diplomacy are "modesty" and "by example."

Some claim that Obama's 'low-profile' diplomacy reminiscent of Mikhail Gorbachev does not secure U.S. national interest in this precarious world. However, his diplomacy has gained broad support at home and abroad. In the Gallop Polls, Americans said that the best thing that President Obama did during his 100 days was to elevate the international image of the U.S.

Of course, he has not yet yielded any tangible results. Iran sentenced a U.S. female reporter detained on espionage charges to 8 years in prison. European countries remain indifferent to U.S. request for additional troop deployment to Afghanistan. Moreover, North Korea launched a long-range rocket and has begun to reprocess fuel rods from its nuclear facilities. North Korea is rejecting dialogue and compromise. Obama responds to North Korea by strategically ignoring it. However, a time will come when the U.S. cannot neglect North Korea any longer because it will likely either conduct a second nuclear test or re-extract plutonium.

At that time, heated discussions over how to deal with a crying pampered child will take place, and Obama's diplomacy could hit a snag. Arguments for harshly punishing the spoiled child and hard-line attacks against 'Smart Diplomacy' will likely ensue. Another factor is China, which has made moves towards becoming a great country amid the global economic crisis. Therefore, to restrain China, North Korea may rise on the U.S. list of diplomatic priorities.

For the past 100 days, Obama diplomacy has just sown the seeds. We have to wait and see what fruit the seeds will bear.

OBAMA VS. OBAMA

By Washington Correspondent Hwang Yu-seok

With the 100th day of Obama's presidency approaching, there are lively debates about Obama's governing style in Washington. Most of them are focused on whether President Obama is making good on his campaign pledges or whether his initial policies are too drastic.

President Obama is getting relatively good marks in the area of campaign pledges. Although it is premature to predict the foreign policy and economic outcomes, which are the two most important pillars of state affairs, the view that things are going in the right direction is prevalent. The results of the opinion polls are about the same.

In foreign affairs, he departed from the George W. Bush Administration's Cold War-era dichotomy between "friends and foes" and showed that there can be various middle grounds between friends and foes. He presented the possibility that foes can be friends and friends can be foes.

In economic matters, he succeeded to some degree in spreading the belief that when the government exercises adequate control over the market, the market can be healthier. We should not belittle the fact that he put the brakes on the economy of greed, which was falling into a bottomless pit.

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At issue is whether these policies will ultimately be beneficial to the U.S. Although President Obama

is enjoying majority support from the people and around the world, his actions may not necessarily correspond to the national interest. This opposition Republican Party often raises this criticism, but these days, civilian experts and media are cautiously taking part. Among the most symbolic and concrete examples (of Obama's policies) are President Obama's "handshake diplomacy" with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who heads a group of left-wing Latin American leaders, and the release of memos on harsh CIA interrogations. Some point out, "Why do we have to see President Obama holding hands with the leader of an anti-U.S. country?" and "Doesn't depicting the CIA interrogation techniques as immoral, which aims to protect the U.S., and holding those responsible accountable serve the U.S. national interest?"

(Skeptics) say that ruling out the possibility of President Chavez's abusing the U.S.'s outstretched hand for political purposes and simply thinking that, "If we open our heart, they will do, too," is too naive to ensure the safety of the U.S. This naivety is reflected in Obama's recent statement that "(Since Venezuela's) defense budget is probably 1/600th of the U.S., it is unlikely that my shaking hands or having a polite conversation with Mr. Chavez will endanger the strategic interests of the U.S."

Many news agencies, including The AP, compare President Obama with the Soviet Union's last President Mikhail Gorbachev. Just as Gorbachev's "new idea of putting reason ahead of ideology" led the Soviet Union toward ruin and allowed the U.S. unilateral dominance, President Obama's "low-profile diplomacy" could damage U.S. leadership. Despite Obama's beckoning, Iran, Venezuela and North Korea are still having their own way.

In response, the Obama Administration is carrying out a policy of pragmatic diplomacy. Although opponents dismiss pragmatism as weakness, indecisiveness, and populism, pragmatism is the only first step in solving entangled matters, as it puts an end to intransigent and rigid thoughts."

In this sense, President Obama should now change course from his first 100-day goal of "overcoming Bush's legacy." From now on, the success or failure of the Obama Administration will be determined by how it projects its identity to the people and solidify internal unity.

WE SHOULD RESOLUTELY DEAL WITH NORTH KOREA'S STEPPED-UP NUCLEAR THREATS

(JoongAng Ilbo, April 27, 2009, Page 42)

North Korea is escalating its nuclear threats on the international community. Following a boycott of the Six-Party Talks and expulsion of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitor, North Korea said on April 25 that it has begun reprocessing spent fuel rods from its nuclear facilities. North Korea is threatening to take action to extract nuclear weapons-grade plutonium.

North Korea's nuclear blackmail is nothing new. In fact, nuclear saber-rattling is the best card North Korea can play to secure national gains in negotiations with other countries. North Korea has deployed similar tactics over the past 15 years since 1993. Of course, North Korea has won political and economical gains through these tactics. Also, the U.S. and the ROK have engaged in talks with North Korea while providing massive economic assistance.

However, now it is time for North Korea to objectively consider what practical gains have resulted (from these tactics). When the Geneva Agreement was reached in 1994, North Korea sang its own praises for making the U.S. submit. However, the construction of the second light water reactor, which was touted as the North's biggest accomplishment, was not completed. It was the same with 2002's second nuclear crisis. What North Korea earned after engaging in a complicated dance that included a nuclear test was being delisted as

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a sponsor of terrorism and several hundred thousand tons of heavy oil. However, the North can be listed as a sponsor of terrorism again if the U.S. pushes for it. Considering the nature of negotiations, the economic recovery or security guarantee that the North Korean leadership seeks is still remote.

North Korea's gravest mistake is pushing too hard even before the U.S. government has completed reviewing its North Korea policy. North Korea should be well aware that the Obama Administration took a stance that benefitted North Korea before its inauguration. Nevertheless, North Korea launched a long-range rocket and vowed to quit the Six Party Talks. How can the U.S. respond to such recklessness?

North Korea, which has held talks with the U.S. since the nuclear test following its 2006 long-range missile launch, will surely escalate its threats. The Choson Sinbo, the newspaper for the pro-North Korean group in Japan, raised the possibility that North Korea may conduct a nuclear test. Therefore, what matters now is how the U.S. and the ROK will respond. The answer lies in Secretary Clinton's remark at a recent House hearing that (the U.S.) should not give in to the kind of back-and-forth, unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime. The U.S. should keep in mind that unless these words are put into practice as in the past, North Korea's bad behavior will repeat itself.

NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT TO MAINTAIN ITS REGIME IS A DISASTER FOR NORTH KOREANS

(Dong-a Ilbo, April 27, 2009, Page 31)

North Korea announced on April 25 that it had started to reprocess spent fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear facilities. This announcement came in response to the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee's placing sanctions on three North Korean companies following the North's rocket launch. When U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated on April 22, "The U.S. should not give in to the unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime," North Korea put two U.S. reporters on trial and hinted at a second nuclear test.

North Korea is ratcheting up tensions with the world, as if to say, "Let's see who is going to win."

Two weeks ago, when the UN Security Council adopted the presidential statement on North Korea's rocket launch, Pyongyang proclaimed that it would respond by "quitting the Six-Party Talks and resuming nuclear development." North Korea now seems to be implementing its

pronouncement by reprocessing about 6,500 stored spent fuel rods. It will also likely soon restore its nuclear facilities, which was being disabled under a denuclearization agreement with the international community.

The Kim Jong-il group is telling its people that nuclear development is designed to "bolster the nuclear deterrence to cope with military threats from hostile forces." At present, no country in the world poses a military threat to the North. The international community only wants the North to give up its nuclear development, which is sparking arms buildup in Northeast Asia and threatens world peace, and take the path towards becoming a normal state. Then, the North will be substantially rewarded under the Six-Party agreement. The entire world is aware that North Korea is using nuclear development to rattle its saber against the outside world and to solidify its internal unity to sustain a hereditary dictatorship, but the Kim Jong-il group is still trying to distort the goodwill of the international community and deceive North Korean residents.

The quid pro quo for North Korea abandoning nuclear programs is enormous. In addition to the economic rewards promised by Six-Party nations, the international community will immediately provide food aid for starving North Korean residents. The North could also escape from economic difficulties by revitalizing economic ties with the ROK, normalizing relations with the U.S., and engaging in exchange with the outside world. Pyongyang's persistent pursuit of nuclear programs is a disaster that deprives North Koreans of such opportunities. Should international sanctions tighten, the North

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Korean regime will ultimately head closer to collapse.

It is desirable for the Kim Jong-il regime to abandon its delusions about nuclear programs. However, this appears unlikely. Therefore, the international community should stand united to bring change to the North through applying effective pressure. To this end, efforts by China and Russia, nations that have long maintained friendly relations with the North, are critical. In addition to persuading the Kim Jong-il regime to follow in their footsteps through seeking reform and openness, the two nations should also join international efforts to pressure the North.

For its part, the ROKG should consistently adhere to its principles on North Korea-related matters, including the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), with an unwavering attitude.

1N. KOREA MUST FACE THE NEW REALITY  
(Chosun Ilbo, April 27, 2009, Page 31)

North Korea on Saturday claimed the reprocessing of spent fuel rods from the atomic power plant in Yongbyon "has begun." The communist country once again turned to its nuclear option after the UN Security Council selected three North Korean businesses as targets for sanctions and froze US\$31.7 million of their overseas assets.

When the Security Council issued a statement on April 14 denouncing North Korea's long-range rocket launch, the communist country announced that it would pull out permanently from the Six-Party Talks and vowed to drastically strengthen its nuclear deterrence.

Experts in the ROK and the U.S. said the brinkmanship demonstrated by North Korea was expected and added it was the North that appeared nervous and puzzled. It is clear that things are not going the way North Korea wants them to. It declared on April 5 that it had succeeded in launching a long-range rocket, but Gen. James Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said nobody would buy missiles from a country that failed three times in test firing them. And when North Korea announced on Friday that it would put two U.S. journalists who had been detained for more than a month on trial, Washington did not dispatch a special envoy to ask humbly to talk about the matter.

In a 10-page diplomatic priority report submitted to the U.S. Congress on Thursday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton removed the

North Korean issue altogether. When questioned by senators, Clinton said the U.S. must maintain a strong, resolute and uniform stance and not be swayed by North Korea's grandstanding. In other words, she was saying Washington no longer intends to be dragged around by North Korea's nuclear provocation and plans to use the tactics of pressure and neglect until it agrees to talks. The situation has headed in a direction North Korea did not expect.

To reprocess spent fuel rods, North Korea has begun cleaning up radiation chemistry laboratories at the Yongbyon plant, which had been closed down for some time. If North Korea activates these facilities and reprocesses the remaining spent fuel rods, it can obtain up to 7 kg of plutonium in three to four months. North Korea already has around 30 kg of plutonium. The U.S. and the ROK do not place a tremendous amount of emphasis on how much more plutonium North Korea may end up with.

At this rate, there is a strong possibility that North Korea may conduct a second nuclear test around the second half of this year. However, the North's nuclear provocation, as evidenced during its recent rocket launch, will only deepen its international isolation and heighten international sanctions against it. In that event it will be even harder for China and Russia to support (the North). Clinton said Saturday that the U.S., along with other members of the Six-Party Talks, will continue to pressure North Korea so that it returns to the Six-Party Talks and resumes its nuclear commitments. Clinton added she hopes dialogue will resume. The North Korean regime should come to terms with this reality and immediately return

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to the negotiation table.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR ISSUE BECOMING MORE COMPLICATED AMID  
CONFRONTATION AND INDIFFERENCE  
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, April 27, 2009, Page 27)

North Korea announced on April 25 that it had started to reprocess spent fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear facility and would bolster its "nuclear deterrence for self-defense." This announcement came in response to the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee's sanctioning three North Korean firms following the North's rocket launch. As North Korea warned in an April 14 Foreign Ministry statement, the situation seems to be getting worse every day.

Considering North Korea's behavior regarding nuclear programs, the situation has gone back to before the February 13, 2007 Agreement. North Korea has expelled International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors from Yongbyon and now threatens to extract weapons-grade plutonium. As the North has claimed, the existing Six-Party agreements have already become meaningless. Of course, it will take some time to restart the nuclear facilities, which have already been largely disabled, but North Korea's nuclear capability will grow further with time. Some cooling-off period following the rocket launch may be inevitable, but if the situation continues to deteriorate, it will be difficult to later reverse course.

North Korea's restraint and realistic understanding are now necessities. The UN Security Council's sanctions on North Korea following its rocket launch reflect a reasonable judgment from the international community. Even though North Korea insists that its rocket launch was a satellite launch, many countries take it as a threat. North Korea should consider why there is big gap in understanding between the North and the international community and adjust its behavior to alleviate international distrust.

The U.S. is also to blame for this situation because it has procrastinated even after deciding on the direction of North Korea policy that calls for a comprehensive resolution and the strengthening of direct negotiations. Considering the Obama Administration's delay in forming its Korean Peninsula team - the official nomination of Kurt Campbell as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs only came recently - the U.S.



Administration is moving too slowly. The U.S. acts without strategic consideration by addressing the North Korean issue only when it emerges as a pending problem. This tact only further complicates the North Korean nuclear issue. The U.S. should rapidly conclude its review of North Korea policy and come forward to establish a new negotiation framework that combines (bilateral) talks with North Korea and the Six-Party Talks.

The ROKG has a big role to play. First, it must make efforts to improve inter-Korean relations. In particular, the ROK should make sure that talks with North Korea regarding the Kaesong Industrial Complex, which will be held soon, yield tangible results. These talks should lead to a breakthrough for better inter-Korean relations. Moreover, the ROK should provide active support to ensure that U.S.-North Korea talks are held in a prompt and in-depth manner. The ROK should increase its weight in the Korean Peninsula discussions. Neglecting the North Korean nuclear issue now will lead to more trouble for all countries.

STEPHENS